European Union countries to extend Green Card facilities to Indian IT professionals by the end of the year 2004;

(b) if so, what is the response of each of these countries; and

(c) the number of requests from Indian professionals and entrepreneurs for such Green Cards for each country of destination pending with Government as on April, 2003 and how many of them have been issued such cards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) The Green Card Scheme is applicable only in Germany. The National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) had taken up the issue of extension of the scheme with relevant authorities in Germany. The German Federal Cabinet has approved the extension of the "Green Card Initiative" for foreign IT specialists till 31st December, 2004. The new regulation also removes the earliers fixed ceiling of 20,000 work permits.

(c) The Green Card Scheme was introduced by the German Government in August, 2000. Till 30th October, 2003, a total of 15,360 Green Cards have been granted, out of which 4,174 were given to Indian nationals, the biggest national group of German Green Card holders.

Complaints of sexual harassment

959. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the General Manager of BSNL, Uttar Kannad has received any complaints for sexual harassment against personnel of B.S.N.L. office at Joida; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken against the offenders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The complainant is not a BSNL employee. The issue is a family dispute between relatives. The whole matter is sub judice since a case

CR No. 551/02 is pending at Dandeli Court (Joida Police Station FIR No. 0717274 dated 16/02/2002).

Uniform licensing regime for mobile services

960. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have introduced a uniform licensing regime for the mobile telephone services;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and reaction of the service providers thereto; and

(c) the benefits likely to accrue to the users?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Sir, the Government has introduced a Unified Access (Basic and Cellular) Services Licensing Regime. In this regime, the Licensee is permitted to provide Basic as well as Cellular Mobile Telephone Services in the licensed service area. All the seven Basic Service Operators have already migrated to Unified Access Services Licence in their respective service areas except for four service areas. Till date, fresh applications for grant of Unified Access Services Licences have been received from three operators for 19 licenses and Letters of Intent have been so far issued for 12 licenses.

(c) The following benefits are expected to accrue:—

(i) Better facilities due to the convergence and rapid advancement of technology;

(ii) Lower tariff due to enhanced competition;

(iii) Both type of services, fixed as well as mobile, can be availed from a single service provider; and

(iv) Rapid expansion of telecome services in the country.